SPORT

National women's one-day event to start from 14th

LAHORE: The National Women's One-day Tournament will be held in Faisalabad from Nov 14 to Dec 6.

The five-team event will be played on a double-league basis with top two teams contesting the final.

Stars will be looking to defend their title as they had beaten Conquerors by five wickets in the final of previous season's edition staged in Rawalpindi.

Challengers, Invincibles and Strikes are the other three teams taking part in the 50-over tournament.

The 20-member preliminary squads of the five teams assembled in Faisalabad on Monday and from them 15 players of each team will be selected after a short training camp at the High Performance Centre in Faisalabad.

A cash prize of Rs1.5 million will be received by the tournament winners while runners-up will earn Rs1 million. Player-of-the-match in each of the 21 matches will get Rs25,000 while the player-of-the-tournament will pocket Rs200,000.

The tournament will see 10 rounds with two matches played in each round followed by the final. All the matches will take place at the Iqbal Stadium and the PCB High-Performance Centre Ground except the Nov 22 Challengers-Strikers fixture which will be staged at the Jawad Club Cricket Ground.

Squads:

CONQUERORS: Fatima Sana (captain), Aleena Masood, Amber Kainat, Aqsa Bibi, Ayesha Bilal, Eisha Naeem, Esha Rahupoto, Farzana Farooq (wicket-keeper), Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Lubna Behram, Maheen Irfan, Maham Anees, Muqaddas Bukhari, Sabiha Noor, Saima Malik, Saira Jabeen, Sidra Nawaz (wicket-keeper), Umm-e-Hani, Zunash Abdul Sattar

STRIKERS: Nashra Sundhu (captain), Aliya Riaz, Aliza Sabir, Amna Bibi, Areesha Noor, Ghulam Fatima, Humna Bilal, Javeria Siddique, Laiba Fatima, Laiba Nasir, Mahnoor Aftab, Najiha Alvi (wicket-keeper), Noreen Yaqoob, Rabia Rani, Rehmat Noreen, Saiqa Riaz, Samina Aftab, Sania Rasheed (wicket-keeper), Shawaal Zulfiqar, Zaib-un-Nisa Niaz

CHALLENGERS: Rameen Shamim (captain), Aleena Shah, Ayesha Zafar, Eyman Fatima, Fatima Shahid, Haleema Dua, Huraina Sajjad, Jannat Rasheed, Maham Manzoor, Memoona Tipu, Neha Sharmin Nadeem, Quratulain, Ramama Nazir, Sadaf Shamas, Sana Talib, Tania Saeed, Tayyaba Imdad, Waheeda Akhtar, Wasifa Hussain (wicket-keeper), Yusra Amir (wicket-keeper)

INVINCIBLES: Muneeba Ali (captain, wicket-keeper), Ayesha Rehman, Bakhtawar Asad, Dua Majid, Fatima Khan, Hafsa Khalid, Khadija Chishti, Laiba Mansoor, Minhail Javaid, Momina Riasat, Nayab (wicket-keeper), Natalia Parvaiz, Neelam Mushtaq, Rida Aslam, Saba Sher, Samiya Afsar, Sana Urooj, Subica Shahzadi, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan

STARS: Omaima Sohail (captain), Anam Amin, Anosha Nasir, Arijah Haseeb, Diana Baig, Fatima Zahra, Gull Rukh, Haniah Ahmer, Kaynat Hafeez, Manahil Rafiq, Noor-ul-Iman, Seema Gul, Shabnam Hayat (wicket-keeper), Sidra Amin, Soha Fatima (wicket-keeper), Syeda Aroob Shah, Syeda Masooma, Syeda Taskyn Fatima, Warda Yousuf, Yusra Ehtesham.—Sports Reporter

ALGORFA (Spain): Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (R) and team-mates attend a training session on Tuesday. The world champions will face Angola in a friendly in Luanda on Friday. Argentina will be without Atletico Madrid trio Julian Alvarez, Nahuel Molina and Giuliano Simeone after they failed to complete procedures linked to the yellow fever vaccine, Argentina's FA said.—AFP

Awais, Faham centuries put Faisalabad on top in QAT

LAHORE: The seventh round of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy commenced across Abbottabad, Islamabad, Peshawar and Rawalpindi on Tuesday, with the opening day featuring three centuries and a solitary five-wicket haul.

At the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Faisalabad's emerging duo Mohammad Awais Zafar and Faham-ul-Haq struck fine centuries to guide their side to a commanding 322 for four in 81 overs against Islamabad.

Awais was unbeaten on 138 off 139 balls with 16 fours and five sixes, while Faham scored 109 off 232 deliveries, hitting 18 boundaries. The pair added 188 runs for the fourth wicket after Faisalabad found themselves struggling at 111-3 having opted to bat. For Awais, it was his sixth first-class hundred, while Faham notched up his second in five innings this season.

In reply, Abbottabad were reeling at 31 for three in 14 overs, trailing by 227 runs against Karachi Blues at stumps. Seamer Saqib Khan struck thrice in seven overs, conceding just 14 runs to leave the hosts in tatters.

Earlier, the Blues were bowled out for 258 in 80 overs, thanks largely to an unbeaten 89 off 152 balls by Danish Aziz, which included seven fours and two sixes. Skipper Shan Masood chipped in with a brisk 43 off 48 balls laced with six boundaries.

At Islamabad's Marghzar Cricket Ground, Sialkot were bowled out for 288 in 76.3 overs, recovering from a strong start of 188-2 before a collapse triggered by Ali Usman (5-98) and Ghulam Haider (3-98).

Openers Azan Awais (81 off 170 balls) and Mohammad Huraira (60 off 64 balls) gave Sialkot a solid start of 113, while Mohsin Riaz contributed 44.

In response, Multan closed the day at 63 for two in 13 overs, still trailing by 225 runs. Spinner Mehran Mumtaz trapped both openers leg-before.

At the Imran Khan Cricket Stadium in Peshawar, Fata were lifted by Salman Khan Jnr's third career and second consecutive century — a patient 114 off 209 balls with 11 fours — and Khushdil Shah's aggressive 95 off 109 balls, as they reached 271 for six in 92.2 overs against Bahawalpur.

The pair put on a 156-run stand for the third wicket after Fata had slumped to 18-2. For Bahawalpur, Gulfam Aziz and Mohammad Imran claimed two wickets apiece.

At the Diamond Cricket Ground in Rawalpindi, Peshawar were bowled out for 245 in 76.1 overs, with Israrullah top-scoring with 83 off 120 balls (9x4, 1x6). He shared a 64-run opening stand with Mohammad Mohsin Khan (24).

Lahore Whites' spin trio — Noman Ali (4-78), Qasim Akram (3-42) and Mohammad Rameez Jnr (3-60) — shared all ten wickets.

By stumps, Lahore Whites were 30 for two in 13 overs, trailing by 215 runs, with Mohammad Amir Khan striking twice late in the day to tilt the balance in Peshawar's favour.

Scores in brief:

Faisalabad v Islamabad at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad

FAISALABAD 322-4 in 81 overs (Mohammad Awais Zafar 138 not out, Faham-ul-Haq 109, Asim Ali Nasir 27; Jawad Ali 2-115)

Karachi Blues v Abbottabad at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

KARACHI BLUES 258 in 80 overs (Danish Aziz 89 not out, Shan Masood 43; Khalid Usman 3-83, Kamran Ghulam 2-12); Abbottabad 31-3, 14 overs (Shahzaib Khan 11 not out; Saqib Khan 3-14)

Multan v Sialkot at Marghzar Cricket Ground, Islamabad

SIALKOT 288 in 76.3 overs (Azan Awais 81, Mohammad Huraira 60; Ali Usman 5-98, Ghulam Haider 3-94); Multan 63-2 in 13 overs (Imran Butt 31; Mehran Mumtaz 2-12)

Fata v Bahawalpur at Imran Khan Cricket Stadium, Peshawar

FATA 271-5 in 92.2 overs (Salman Khan Jnr 114, Khushdil Shah 95; Gulfam Aziz 2-31, Mohammad Imran 2-32)

Peshawar v Lahore Whites at Diamond Cricket Ground, Islamabad

PESHAWAR 245 in 76.1 overs (Israrullah 83, Iftikhar Ahmed 42; Noman Ali 4-78, Qasim Akram 3-42); LAHORE WHITES 30-2 in 13 overs (Ali Zaryab 17 not out; Mohammad Amir Khan 2-18).—Agencies

Mexican president to give prime World Cup ticket to young girl

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Monday she would skip the opening match of the 2026 World Cup in Mexico City, choosing instead to give her premium seat to a young female fan who could not otherwise afford to attend.

"I've made a decision. I'm going to give my ticket to the opening ceremony to a girl or young woman who doesn't have the opportunity to attend and who loves football," Sheinbaum told a press conference.

During FIFA President Gianni Infantino's visit to the country in August, Sheinbaum said she would not be using the ticket.

However, she has now decided to gift the coveted ticket number 00001 for the match on June 11, which kicks off the tournament co-hosted by Mexico, Canada and the U.S.

"We are deciding how we are going to choose, but I am going to give that ticket, the number 00001, to a girl so she can dream about football," she added.

The president recalled that Mexico City hosted World Cup openers in 1970 and 1986, making the Azteca Stadium the first venue in history to stage three opening matches.

According to The Athletic website, prices for the opening game ranges from around $370 in the cheapest category to around $1,825 for the most expensive ticket. The minimum wage in Mexico is 8,364 pesos (around $455) per month.

For the first time, 48 teams will participate in the 2026 World Cup, which will last more than five weeks after the kick-off. The final will be played on July 19 in East Rutherford, New York.

Sheinbaum also highlighted the planned activities and investment in infrastructure in the co-host cities of Guadalajara and Monterrey.

However, she did not specify the projects or funding amounts involved.

She said Mexico expects an additional 5.5 million visitors across the three host cities. "It will be a very special time with a significant economic impact, but we will be ready in a few months," Sheinbaum said.—Agencies

Asjad advances to last 16 as Shahid ousted from worlds

DOHA: Asjad Iqbal defeated Germany's Alexander Widau to advance into the pre-quarterfinals of the IBSF World Snooker Championship, while Shahid Aftab suffered a last-24 defeat on Tuesday.

Following the league round, Pakistan's Asjad secured top positions in his group, earning a direct berth into the last 16. National champion Shahid, however, qualified for the preliminary last-24 knockout round.

In his final group match, Asjad staged a brilliant comeback to defeat Widau 4-2.

After losing the first two frames 72-15 and 61-11, Asjad won four consecutive frames.

He clinched a tight third frame 51-47, the fourth 71-57, the fifth 66-21 and sealed the match 71-59 in the sixth, a frame in which Widau compiled a 51 break.

Shahid concluded his league campaign with a 4-1 (60-37, 59-51, 96-26, 53-63, 73-21). victory over Qatar's Khamis Alobaidli.

However, Shahid's tournament ended in the last-24 round after a 4-3 defeat to Chan Keng Kwang of Singapore.

The match swung back and forth, with Chan taking the first two frames 57-53 and 69-36. Shahid responded by winning the next two frames 79-7 and 90-6, but Chan claimed the fifth 54-24. Shahid forced a decider by winning the sixth frame 67-2, only for Chan to secure victory with a 73-34 win in the seventh.—Agencies

Japan shooting for World Cup final spot: JFA head Miyamoto

TOKYO: Japan have never gone beyond the round of 16 at a World Cup but Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, the country's top football official, said they are high on confidence and have set their sights on reaching the final of next year's tournament in North America.

Japan Football Association President Miyamoto says the four-time Asian champions have the experience and depth of talent in the squad to make a major impact at the first 48-team World Cup, which is being hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Japan became the first team to qualify for the 2026 World Cup in March and will bring a squad packed with players plying their trade at some of Europe's biggest clubs including Wataru Endo at Liverpool and Ritsu Doan at Eintracht Frankfurt.

Recording their first ever win over five-time world champions Brazil in a friendly last month has only fuelled their ambition further.

"The players are all playing football in Europe, in the Champions League, the Premier League, the Bundesliga, and they know how they should play against big teams and great players," said Miyamoto, a former national team captain.

"This kind of confidence will show something new to the world, we hope. What we can do is prepare for the World Cup, for the team to reach where we want to."

Japan have played at every World Cup since making their debut in 1998 but have never reached the quarter-finals while no Asian nation has ever advanced to the final. Hosts South Korea came closest in 2002 with a run to the semi-finals.

Miyamoto played in the Philippe Troussier-coached side who were eliminated by Turkey in the last 16 that same year when Japan co-hosted the finals, and the country lost at the same stage in 2010, 2018 and 2022.

Their elimination in Qatar three years ago came in a penalty shoot-out against Croatia at a tournament where the Samurai Blue had defeated both Germany and Spain in the group phase.

"We need to get through the round of 16, but they've got the confidence to advance further, maybe until the final," Miyamoto said. "If they want that, I would support them.

"Twenty years ago we couldn't say that. Ten years ago Keisuke [Honda], Yuto [Nagatomo] said the aim was to be champions. Maybe 10 years ago it sounded surprising."

Coach Hajime Moriyasu thinks Japan are not quite ready to win a World Cup but believes a place in the final is not out the question.

"Our coach, during our meetings, he says all the time that we are not a real candidate to win the World Cup but he says, at the same time, we might have a chance to get to the final, said Miyamoto.

"Everybody has a new chapter. There are reasons that we can accept the team will be able to."

Moriyasu will be coaching Japan for the second time at a World Cup and is likely to select a squad featuring at least 10 of the players who featured in 2022, and Miyamoto feels the team will benefit from the lessons learned in Qatar.—Reuters

Bracy accepts 45-month sanction for doping

NEW YORK: World 100-metre silver medallist Marvin Bracy has accepted a 45-month sanction for anti-doping rule violations, the US Anti-Doping Agency said on Monday.

Bracy, who won silver at the 2022 World Championships, was provisionally suspended in February 2024 after an out-of-competition test came back positive for an anabolic agent.

USADA said it opened an investigation into Bracy after receiving a tip from a whistleblower.

Bracy had initially tried to tamper with the investigation, according to USADA, which conducted the inquiry with the Athletics Integrity Unit and US Drug Enforcement Administration.

Bracy later admitted his violations and provided "substantial assistance." He has not competed since 2023.

"This case is also an example of the importance of cooperation between like-minded organisations and law enforcement agencies when it comes to eradicating organised doping schemes," USADA chief executive Travis Tygart said. "This investigation has already resulted in several impactful outcomes which will be announced at a later date."

Bracy is the second sprinter from the 2022 US podium sweep of the blue-riband event to run afoul of anti-doping rules.

The gold-medal winner, Fred Kerley, was provisionally suspended in August by the AIU for whereabouts failures. He said at the time that he planned to contest the allegation.—Reuters

Two more matches decided

LAHORE: Two more matches were decided in the 13th Maj Gen Saeed Uz Zaman Janjua Memorial Polo Cup here at the Lahore Garrison Polo Ground on Tuesday.

SEAFA Logistics International outplayed Sula Polo 6½-3 as Mumtaz Abbas Niazi and retired Col Omer Minhas scored two goals each while Asmar Aqdas and Muzammil added one apiece for the winners who had a half-goal handicap advantage.

In the second encounter, FG/Din defeated Indus Polo 8-5.

Hamza Mawaz Khan led the charge with four goals for the victors while Mir Huzaifa Ahmed and Sheikh Muhammad Raffay chipped in with two each.—Sports Reporter

Ronaldo says 2026 World Cup 'definitely' his last

RIYADH: Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo on Tuesday said next year's World Cup would be his last as he winds down one of the all-time great careers.

The 40-year-old forward, with more than 950 club and international goals, also put a timeline on his cryptic retirement hint, saying he will hang up his boots in "one or two years" after telling the world that he would be retiring soon.

Ronaldo made his debut as a teenager at Sporting Lisbon in 2002 and said in an interview that he would retire soon to spend time with his family.

He extended his contract with Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr until 2027 in June and is targeting the World Cup, the only major title missing from his trophy cabinet.

"Soon for me means in 10 years... No, I'm joking," Ronaldo, who began a lucrative stint at Al Nassr in 2023, said via video call at a Saudi-hosted global summit on tourism and investment.

"I'm really enjoying the moment right now. As you know, in football, when you reach some age, you count the months very quick.

"I feel very good in this moment. I score goals, I still feel quick and sharp. I'm enjoying my game in the national team. But of course, let's be honest. What I mean by soon is probably one or two years."

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is targeting a sixth World Cup next year. He came closest to lifting the trophy in 2006, when Portugal lost to France in the semi-finals.

Portugal have yet to qualify for the 2026 tournament in the USA, Canada and Mexico, but can secure their spot if they beat Ireland on Thursday.

"Definitely, yes, because I will be 41 years old [at the World Cup]," said Ronaldo, who is also the top scorer in history with 143 international goals, when asked if 2026 would be his World Cup swansong.

"I gave everything for football. I've been in the game for the last 25 years. I did everything, I have many records in the different scenarios in the clubs and also in the national teams. I'm really proud. So let's enjoy the moment, live the moment."

Last month, Ronaldo became the top goalscorer in World Cup qualifying history when he netted twice against Hungary to reach 41 goals, overtaking retired Guatemalan international Carlos Ruiz's 39.

During an interview on Piers Morgan Uncensored, the former Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus forward opened up further about the realities of his looming retirement.

"It will be difficult? Yes. Probably will cry, yes. I'm an open person. It will be very, very difficult," he said.

Ronaldo said he knows he will go down in history as one of the best players ever. But can his son Cristiano Jr, who is following in his footsteps by playing for the Portugal U-16 team, be a better player than his father?

"As human beings, we always don't want anybody being better than us. But I wish my kids will be better than me. I'm never going to be jealous of him," he said.

"I don't want to add pressure to that, because what I want for him is to be happy. It doesn't matter if you want to play football or play another sport. Be happy, be free. Don't be with the pressure of your daddy because that is a lot.

"This is a new generation, a different generation. They think different, they live different. But as a father, I'm here to help him to be whatever he wants to be. I will be his support."

Ronaldo joined Al Nassr after leaving Manchester United for a second time in late 2022, a move that heralded a influx of late-career stars to the oil-rich kingdom.

Ronaldo initially signed for 200 million euros a year, according to a source close to Al Nassr at the time, and inked a two-year contract extension in June.

Last month, he was named by Bloomberg as the sport's first billionaire, and topped the Forbes list of highest-paid footballers for the sixth time in a decade.

With on-and off-field earnings of an estimated $280 million, Ronaldo will earn more than double that of second-placed rival Lionel Messi during the upcoming season, according to Forbes.

Saudi Arabia, which is spending big on sports and entertainment as part of its economic diversification plan, was named as host of the 2034 World Cup.—Agencies